

Melbourne – Rockbank
KUNDRATHU KUMARAN TEMPLE
Appearance and Development



Rajaratnam Vaithiyanathan's dedication

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(Rajaratnam Vaithiyanathan's dedication)

The Grand old lady of ancient Tamil Poet Auvaiyar quotes “**Don’t live in a village where there is no worship place**” (Temple).

After we had migrated to Australia, presently living in the Victorian state of Melbourne City. For those Hindu religious people, **Rajaratnam Vaithiyanathan (Ranjan)** has been a long-time resident of the area, along with others who are living in the North West Region, currently contemplating the idea of constructing a public Temple that too is a Murugan Temple (common for all). Hence their generous efforts, The Temple came into existence. Whereas now we all worship at **Rockbank, Kundrathu Kumaran Temple**.

This write up is recorded here directly from the minds, to benefit and educate the future generations about the temple’s appearance and development.

I submit this to the lotus feet of Kundrathu Kumaran.

There was an advertisement about land sale consisting of thirty-two (32) acres in the Rockbank area in the local newspaper. This advertisement was communicated to Vaithiyanathan through a person who saw the ad. So Vaithiyanathan and another person went to meet the Real Estate agent (who had offered to sell the land). At that time, Vaithiyanathan had observed such interest shown by others in the purchase of the

land, so he immediately held the land by paying ten per cent of the land value in advance, from his own money.

The proposed temple should be a common one for all and should not belong to an individual. With this good intention, Vaithiyanathan approached many others and made considerable efforts to raise the balance amount.

Approximately twenty people who accepted this, had offered their contributions and the land was successfully purchased.

The main reason the land was purchased was to build a temple. Therefore, Vaithiyanathan requested the landowners to donate five acres of land to the temple. It was then kindly accepted by the owners, at that time.

Since these blocks of land had not yet been amended, it was not possible to subdivide. Due to this, the land was initially leased to the temple. It was then decided that it will be donated to the temple when the ground is eventually subdivided.

Further to this, a question arose. Where should the temple be constructed? The owners of the land showed the location that was covered with large rocks, stones, wild trees, and thorns as far as the eye could see.

One day, some of the landowners gathered, having a discussion at the land near a gum tree. They observed a black rock at the trunk of the gum tree. They simulated it as “Pillaiyar”. Then they performed pooja first and began to worship it.

Vaithiyanathan would often visit the area and develop ideas of how to clean up the place and build a temple. It is customary for

him, to get out of his car and worship Pillaiyar whenever he arrives. This practice has continued for more than fifteen years.

The land, which was allotted for the temple, was often where foxes, snakes, poisonous spiders and small animals were seen roaming around. However, without any hesitation, Vaithiyanathan bought a tractor with his own money and started to clear a portion of the land. He spent twenty-five thousand **(\$25,000)** Australian dollars on that machine.



At the beginning, it was decided to build a farm shed for people to come and worship. They needed more money to construct the farm shed, so they joined another thirty members and collected five hundred dollars (\$500) from each. Vaithiyanathan completed the work with the assistance of a couple of members.



Vaithiyanathan worked on the temple grounds every day. One day, he was amazed to see a miracle appear. A crack in the gum tree mentioned earlier, from which he saw an appearance of four elephant legs. A few days later, he invited the other members to witness the miracle. They too, were amazed.



Vaithiyanathan decided to build a pedestal and a room inside the shed. At that time, the land lacked electricity, water, and gas. So, he purchased a generator with his own money and began the work.

Every day, Vaithiyanathan went there alone and did the work. During this time, no one took part in the work, thinking that it is impossible for him to build a temple in this place. A few have even voiced their disbelief towards him. However, Vaithiyanathan did not give up and continued his work with confidence and perseverance, over a countless period of time.

One day, a member who visited the place presented a curtain to Vaithiyanathan for the temple, similar to the one found in the Kathirkamam Murugan temple in Sri Lanka. He hung the curtain high on swami pedestal he was erecting. From then on, it became his custom to continue the work after worshipping it.

He always thought about the "Vel" in Kathirkamam Temple and how it looked. It was in his mind all the time.

Vaithiyanathan had a Pillaiyar statue in his house, that he had brought from Sri Lanka when he came to Australia in 1985. He heard that idols could not be worshipped at home, so he kept the statue hidden in his house. When he started to work at Rockbank, he brought the idol of Pillaiyar from his house and placed it on the rock that he worshipped as "Vazhi Pillaiyar". Since then, he has been worshipping when he arrives and performs poojas on Fridays.



He completed all the work inside the farm shed from his own money. The intention is to conduct poojas and collective prayers there. So, he dug the land from a distance of about **1000 meters** and completed the water pipe connection with help of a member. He then constructed a temporary toilet facility as well.

It is noteworthy that the technical knowledge that was inherent in him, stood out significantly.

At this point in time, they received an unexpected letter from the local council, instructing them to not build any building on the land.

Vaithiyanathan was so upset, that he decided to visit Kathirkamam temple in Sri Lanka and Batu Cave Murugan Temple in Malaysia with his family.

A miracle occurred in Kathirkamam Temple.

Vaithiyanathan was waiting in a line outside the temple, with the pooja plate to perform the pooja with his family. Then a man dressed in white came from inside the temple to Vaithiyanathan. He took his hand and led only him into the temple. He took his pooja plate from his hand and went inside through the curtain. It was the same type of curtain tied for worship, in the shed at Rockbank in Melbourne.

Vaithiyanathan always thinks about the Vel inside, in the back of the curtain in Kathirkamam Sanctum. That thought followed him there as well. After performing the pooja with Vaithiyanathan's pooja materials on the plate, the priest came out. He told him in the Sinhala language with blessings that **"You go back, all your wishes will be completed"**. It is noteworthy that Vaithiyanathan did not say anything about the thought inside his heart to the priest.

After that, he went to Malaysia. When he went to worship at the famous Murugan temple in Batu Cave, a miracle happened.

The temple priest asked Vaithiyanathan, "What is your name and which country have you come from"? He told him his name and said he has come from Sri Lanka. The priest welcomed him with a smile and told, **"You are the person we are expecting, you have come to the right place"**! Surprised on hearing this, Vaithiyanathan showed him the photos of the land where they wanted to build a temple, in Melbourne Rockbank and the figures of elephant legs in the Gum tree.

The priest was astonished through the soul on seeing these photos and told him that a similar miracle was seen in the Batu Cave years back and then only the Murugan shrine cherished here.

Another priest emerging from the Sanctum, gave a Vel, silk cloth, flowers garlands and holy ashes (Thiruneer) and said with blessings that **“You go and all your thoughts will take right shape”**. Vaithiyanathan was surprised by what the priest in Batu Cave said, as it was similar to what the Sinhala Priest said first in Kathirkamam temple.

The Vel, silk cloth, garlands and Thiruneeru were kept in a new suitcase and he travelled to Melbourne by plane. Vaithiyanathan did not record the items in the deed issued by the Airport Authorities.

A miracle happened there too.

Vaithiyanathan and his daughter had been asked to go for an independent (random) examination. When the customs officers sent their belongings into the scanner machine, a sound arose from the daughter’s bag. The reason for that was a flower and a little thiruneeru. So Vaithiyanathan’s wife was scared, since the scanning machine made a sound for this tiny flower and a little bit of thiruneeru. What would happen to his belongings, which were Vel garlands and thiruneeru?

However, when the belongings of Vaithiyanathan had made no sound at all when entered into the scanning machine, this was a big surprise!

The officers there had no doubts, so everything found in Sanctorum, came home without any problems. He kept them in the Pooja room in his house and prayed to that “Vel” daily.

Within two weeks, a letter of acceptance was received unexpectedly saying that temple and building can be constructed on the land.

When the letter was received, he believed that it was a miracle performed by Lord Murugan. After discussing with the Administrators in **2003 on 'Karthigai Deepam Day'**, he took the Vel image of Lord Murugan with his family members and placed it in the Temple shed and offered prayers.

On the same day, a Pillaiyar statue donated by a member to the temple was also installed.



After completing the works inside the shed, poojas and combined prayers began to take place regularly on every Friday.



After that, he made arrangements for electricity connection. He dug the land from **500 metres** distance and fixed the connection. The use of the generator had decreased gradually from that day onwards.

Now the need arose to appoint a permanent priest to the temple. As one of the priests who was a member of the temple committee, (who was doing poojas there every Friday) was engaged in a permanent job outside. This matter was discussed. Vaithiyanathan offered to build a house on the land by himself with suitable facilities if a priest was appointed permanently. He began to build a three-bedroom house out of the approximately one hundred thousand dollars (**\$100,000.00**) **he was to donate**. A few members visited and cooperated on his foresighted mission every Saturday. The house was completed in six months.



The temple's foundation work was done with the remaining amount available from his donation, after completing the temple priest's housework.



The members of the committee discussed in detail, to mobilise funds required for completion of the temple. Since the land purchased was on lease, it was impossible to borrow money from the bank. Without any hesitation, Vaithiyanathan mortgaged his house property, borrowed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) as a loan from the bank, and contributed this amount towards the temple's construction (**he also accepted to take on the interest, as per bank's interest rate**).

Some devotees and some members came forward to accept to sponsor for the idols to be consecrated. Others donated money in cash.

Vaithiyanathan with the collaboration of Australia's trained construction workers, in a joint venture along with them and completed the walls, windows, doors frames and roof.



On this occasion, applications were solicited to bring in three Sthapathy from Malaysia to do sculptural work in the temple.

But only one Sthapathy got the opportunity to come here. He had sculpting experience in many temples in Malaysia, working along with four to five other sculptors.

So, he had fear and hesitation about finishing the work at the Rockbank Temple on his own. Vaithiyanathan gave him moral support by telling him to overcome his fears and uncertainties and act courageously. Along with him, he completed the construction of the Sanctum, pedestals and mandapams.

It is also worth mentioning that some members and devotees worked with Vaithiyanathan to construct the stupa (kutumi) at the top of the main tower. After that, the Sthapathy who came from Malaysia started doing sculptures.

During this period Vaithiyanathan completed the construction of Madapalli (kitchen for the preparation of food for the temple and free distribution to the devotees who come to worship) with two attached rooms.



A disciple brought an idol of 'Karpaga Vinayagar' from India and handed it over to the temple as his donation.

It was decided to erect the idol of 'Karpaga Vinayagar' in front of the gum tree, already mentioned in this report. Vaithiyanathan, along with a few others, laid the foundation and pedestal for it. They built four pillars and finished the construction with roof.



With this construction work, he realised there was a need for a festival hall for the temple and started the work without any delay.

He fulfilled it. The completion of the foundation, the surrounding walls, the roof, the windows, and the doors. His idea was to set up a canteen in the festival hall itself. He designed the festival hall accordingly.



When the sculptures were completed for the temple, all the members decided to perform the consecration. The day was marked.

Vaithiyanathan, along with the secretary of the committee and the priest who worked at that time, brought all the materials needed for the consecration from India with the help of a devotee. All the items brought for the consecration, were kept safely in the festival hall and the idols were kept safely in the rooms adjoining the madapalli (kitchen) built by Vaithiyanathan.

After that, the consecration ceremony was held with great pomp on **February 12th, 2012**, with the support of the temple members and devotees.

The Vel brought by Vaithiyanathan from Malaysia is consecrated at the Sanctorium of Lord Muruga. Every year on

the auspicious day of **Thirukarthikai Deepam** festival showering milk on the “Vel” is conducted and taken through the inner and outer streets.



A few months later, when the pre-planned festival hall, began further construction work, including the canteen, Vaithiyanathan had to face opposition from some members.

However, he overcame the reactions that came with unwavering confidence and completed the specific building work as planned.

The festival hall that was open to the public, still caters for many weddings, sacred ceremonies, art festivals, and relatives' remembrance events, is also held here.

The canteen that operates here also provides revenue for the administration of the temple as well.



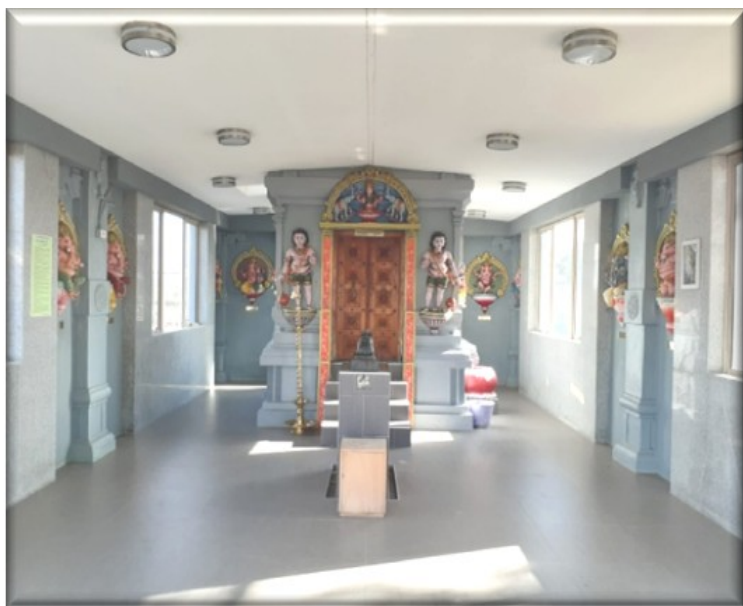
Without limiting his temple commitments and work, Vaithiyanathan went there, three to four days a week to clean the area around the temple. He cleared the garbage, cutting and removing the grass and bushes, and spread white sand around the temple grounds.

One year after the consecration, a chariot and sapparam was needed for the temple festival. Due to the lack of funds in the temple, he used two old motor vehicles he had and with his technical knowledge, built the chariot and sapparam using his own imagination and finished it on his own.



The chariot floated with the Deity, during festivals for five years. The sapparam he made is still in use today for Deity's outing during festivals.

Devotees who come to worship the Karpaga Vinayagar (placed at the temple entrance) , faced some difficulties in worshipping. The heavy wind, cold and the incoming rain were a hindrance to the devotees. Vaithiyanathan rushed to find a solution to the problem. He built walls around with windows and door. He also wanted to sculpture depicting sixteen incarnations of Pillaiyar on the walls inside that building. So, he requested the sthapathy to sculpture.



A few years later, the temple's executive committee arranged for a carved chariot from Sri Lanka. Vaithiyanathan was involved in providing a very tall shed for the protection of the carved chariot.

A few came to him for help in the early works. Vaithiyanathan then, with the cooperation of his Australian worker, finished the very tall shed before the carved chariot arrived.



As he cleaned the temple's perimeter, the piles of stones set aside there, appeared to be a small mountain on one side. Observing that, Vaithiyanathan and some members decided that it would be better to build the 'Athmalingam building' on the site, which they had kept in mind for a long time. **Athmalingam** is a form of Deity that is conducive to conducting and worshipping the ancestors and their rituals that regulate the deceased's own relationships, in remembrance of the departed relatives of this world. As well as to worship Lord Shiva on special days, devotees can perform poojas and pour milk according to their choice.

One particular day when Vaithiyanathan was working outside the temple, a devotee who visited there said "Whenever I come

to Australia, I come to this temple to pray. I have observed that you have been involved in the temple work, regardless of whether it is raining, cold or windy. I cannot do anything physical to help you. I am from Singapore and returning soon. I will give you ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). You can use this donation for the expenses required for the restoration of this temple”.

Vaithiyanathan immediately took him to the temple office and handed him the receipt for the particular donation and said "I will use this money for the Athmalingam building."

The management of the temple asked Vaithiyanathan to construct the building for Athmalingam within a certain amount. Without utilising the temple's money, he used only the money donated by the Singapore devotee to buy cement and floor tiles. Then he laid the foundation by himself. Also, he finished doing things, like electric connection and the plumbing facility on his own. With the help of Sthapathy, he erected pillars. The Sthapathy carved sculptures on the pillars. Vaithiyanathan finally finished laying the floor tiles.

One member who donated was 'Athamalingam and Nandi'. Vaithiyanathan arranged for their import transactions from India and accepted the cost himself.

During the Shivratri festival in the year 2020, the specific Athmalingam and Nandi were consecrated.



Vaithiyanathan has experienced many technical jobs, including construction work and motor vehicle repair work. Beyond that, he is 'a good chef'.

Vaithiyanathan is also an active cook and pioneer during the temple festivities and 'Annathanam'. He had also works with the chef on the days when the canteen was opened, cooking, and assisting him. Also **contributing his diligent work for the temple fund (with the help of a handful of people)** for weddings and various festivities for more than three hundred (300) people.

For many years, a Sri Lankan Tamil has pioneered this Kundrathu Kumaran Temple's construction and devoted himself entirely to its **development and growth**. Vaithiyanathan never really cared about his earnings, nor his endless efforts towards the temple day and night (without worrying about adequate food and sleep) in spite of the weather conditions. **Without wasting money** to hire people, he worked by himself very hard, carrying out as many jobs as possible, shouldering the work by

himself as much as possible. He does the work he has taken on, **with courage and cheerfulness** without saying that he cannot do it because he always has positive thoughts.

One of the main reasons the **Kundrathu Kumaran Temple** has risen in Melbourne Rockbank without any debt, is because of his hard work, prophetic thoughts, and dedication.

The important news is that there are no public temples in this country that has been established without debt. As well as in some other countries, having the iconic name engraved on it is an example for the temple.

The name and fame of Rajaratnam Vaithiyanathan (Ranjan) who created this temple, with no self-expectation and sacrificial thinking. He will forever remain in the minds of Hindus not only living in the state of Victoria, but also in the minds of Hindus on the Australian continent.

This ‘sacred service of his’ cannot be forgotten or denied.





